

**Hartford Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children
Policies and Guidelines
School Readiness Fees and Subsidies (PO-09-03)**

The Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children requires all School Readiness programs to determine, collect and document parent fees based on the School Readiness Sliding Fee scale and/or Childcare Subsidies to complement the state's reimbursement for School Readiness cost. Funds collected must be utilized in the School Readiness site from which funds were collected in order to enhance the program and services for the enrolled children and families. The full expenditure of how these funds were utilized must be reported to the Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation's Division for Young Children twice per fiscal year. All programs shall collect parent fees based on the following guidelines:

- A. For families whose incomes are less than 75% of the state's median income (SMI) guideline, sub-grantees shall determine fees for School Readiness supported childcare slots based solely on the School Readiness Fee Schedule.
- B. No family, regardless of the number of children participating in a Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children's sub-grantee School Readiness program, shall be charged more than the calculated family contribution.
- C. For families with incomes greater than or equal to 75% of SMI, the School Readiness Fee Schedule shall be extended to include all families using School Readiness funded slots. No family, regardless of income, shall be charged more than the sub-grantee's established cost of care.
- D. School Readiness program sub-grantees shall annually publish their cost of care for School Readiness supported spaces and shall file their published rate with the Division for Young Children.
- E. School Readiness program sub-grantees shall not charge fees to families receiving TFA cash assistance who have no earned income. In this case, there will be no fee assessed whether for the family or for a child in the family that is using the School Readiness supported slot.

- F. School Readiness program sub-grantees shall charge fees to families receiving TFA cash assistance who have earned income.
- G. All fees from families received by School Readiness program sub-grantees shall be used to support the School Readiness program. NOTE: School Readiness sub-grantees managing School Readiness programs may set up a separate account to hold parent fees collected by the School Readiness program. Should the sub-grantee intend not to re-invest those funds in the School Readiness site from which the funds are collected a written request must be submitted in advance to the Division for Young Children seeking prior permission from the DFYC and the CT Office of Early Childhood. The written request must include a copy of the documentation forwarded to the Parent Advisory Board that articulates the recommended plan not to re-invest parent fees into the school readiness program site, the rationale for the recommendation and the response from the Advisory Board.
- H. Family income and family size need not be determined when a family agrees to pay the cost of care.
- I. For families receiving Care 4 Kids subsidies with multiple children enrolled in a school readiness or other programs outside of school readiness, sub-grantees must charge the family contribution listed on the Care 4 Kids certificate.
- J. For families not receiving Care 4 Kids subsidies with multiple children enrolled in a school readiness and other programs outside of school readiness, sub-grantees must contact the other program provider(s) with parent permission to discuss if any of the programs can accommodate all the children. If this is not possible, the programs will equitably split the family contribution fee based on the number of children served. If both programs can accommodate all the children, parents will choose which option they prefer including children split between two programs, resulting in split fees. If the other program is state-funded, the programs may contact the Division for Young Children for guidance on how to split the parent fee.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MAYOR'S CABINET FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AND ITS DIVISION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

- A. The Division for Young Children shall notify parents of any upcoming change 30 days prior to the date the change is to take place.
- B. The Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children shall approve or reject School Readiness sub-grantee programs' requests regarding the waiver of fees.
- C. The Division for Young Children shall establish written policies and procedures for the implementation of this fee policy, including but not limited to, criteria regarding school readiness families with child care expenses for children other than the school readiness child. Annually, an updated copy of the fee policies and procedures, approved by the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children and signed by the Mayor and Superintendent, must be attached to the local School Readiness application.
- D. The Division for Young Children shall require its sub-grantees to establish written fee policies and to disseminate these policies to families and staff, at least in their respective Family handbooks. Such policies shall be based on the Cabinet's policy and, at a minimum, shall address:
 - 1. how family contribution is determined;
 - 2. how fees are assessed and collected;
 - 3. how income, family size, cash assistance status and any other eligibility factors are determined and verified;
 - 4. how confidentiality of family information is maintained; and
 - 5. procedures addressing other issues, including but not be limited to, fee forgiveness, failure to pay, any process for the temporary reduction in assessed fees and the process for appealing a fee determination.
- E. The Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children and its Division for Young Children shall ensure that the fee policy is adhered to by its sub-grantees.

- F. The Division for Young Children shall require its sub-grantees to submit a report on actual fee income and the Division for Young Children shall review submission monthly.
- G. The Division for Young Children shall require the submission of accurate data to the Division for Young Children on fees collected each month using the Monthly Service Delivery Report and shall review that data for consistency with established policy.

DETERMINING FAMILY INCOME, FAMILY CONTRIBUTION AND FEE

- A. Family income and size:
 1. are used to calculate the family contribution; and
 2. must be determined at the time of initial enrollment and annually thereafter.
- B. Family contribution and fee shall be determined by:
 1. taking the computed gross annual family income;
 2. finding the most recently published GENERAL POLICY the income falls under; and
 3. determining the family contribution calculation percentage: 2, 4, 6, 8 or 10 (based on whether the income is **under** 20%, **under** 30%, **under** 40%, **under** 50% or **under** 75% of SMI) or a higher -SRC-determined- percentage for incomes over 75% SMI, to find the percentage of a family's income that must be contributed to child care as follows:
 - **Monthly Income Calculation:**

$$\frac{\text{Gross annual income}}{12} = \text{monthly income}$$
 - **Monthly Family Contribution Calculation:**

$$\text{Monthly income} \times \% \text{ calculation} = \text{monthly family contribution}$$
 - **Weekly Family Contribution Calculation (For School Day & Full-Day):**

$$\text{Monthly family contribution} = \text{weekly family contribution}$$

